

Andrew "Andy" Heermance Memorial



ANDREW (ANDY) HEERMANCE MEMORIAL

located in the circle at LaBaron Drive and DeSoto Drive

Andrew (Andy) Heermance

1895-1984

Pioneer Aviator and One of the Founding Fathers of
Miami Springs

Miami Springs resident Andy Heermance was truly one of the foremost "magnificent young men in their flying machines" with a 66-year career that spanned flying WWI Jennies to soaring gliders in the 1980's. Although born in Rhinebeck, NY, this longtime resident and aviator was undoubtedly the one man most responsible for the fact that Miami International Airport has become one of the busiest in the world. Andy was the Director of Aviation for the City of Miami from 1928 to 1938, and due to his vision and his early guidance it has become the bustling international transportation and commercial hub that we know today.

He was first bitten by the flying bug in 1916. Learning to fly at the Curtiss Airplane Company's Experimental Flying Station in Newport News, VA, he soon became an instructor. With the advent of World War I, Andy enrolled in the Army Air Ground School in Princeton, NJ and later instructed fledgling pilots at Kelly Field in Texas and tested flying fighters and trainers for the military.

After the war, Andy returned to the Curtiss Company managing a flight school, doing exhibition flying and serving as the private pilot for City Founder Glenn Curtiss. When Curtiss began his aviation and development activities in Florida, Andy moved to Miami Springs (then called Country Club Estates) with him to open and manage the Florida Aviation Camp in Hialeah. He also worked with James Bright in using aviation to fertilize and seed local farm areas. Purchasing one of the first Curtiss-Bright homes in 1925, Andy was one of the original 74 voters who voted to incorporate the City in 1926. The devastating hurricane of that year destroyed this home, but he and his wife, local beauty Margaret Hequembourg, soon purchased another one nearby, where they raised three sons and a daughter. He remained in Curtiss's employment until the great man's death.

Andy foresaw the possibilities of aviation in Florida, and went about convincing others with great success, earning him recognition in the prestigious Who's Who in World Aviation. After his retirement from the Miami Aviation Department, he remained in the aircraft business with Air Carrier Engine Service and Precision Air, and took up glider flying. He held A and E License #1309, and was a member of the Early Birds, the Quiet Birdmen, the OX-5 Club and the National Aeronautical Association. In 1976 the Hialeah Home News quoted Andy as believing that Miami Springs has "lived up to the expectations of its Founder, Glenn Curtiss, as a pretty, friendly residential community we can call home."

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